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COURT REVOKES U.S. CITIZENSHIP OF MASSACHUSETTS MAN WHO SERVED THE NAZIS DURING 1943 LIQUIDATION OF THE WARSAW JEWISH GHETTO

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Assistant Attorney General Christopher A. Wray of the Criminal Division today announced that the U.S. District Court in Boston has revoked the U.S. citizenship of a Millbury, Massachusetts man based on his service during World War II in an SS unit that helped perpetrate Nazi Germany's destruction of the Warsaw Jewish Ghetto in 1943.

"With the crucial assistance of collaborators like Zajanckauskas, the Nazis murdered millions of Jews," said Assistant Attorney General Wray. "The decision is another reminder of the government's unswerving commitment to the pursuit of justice on behalf of the victims of the Holocaust."

In a decision issued today following a trial held in Boston on Jan. 10-12, U.S. District Judge Nathaniel M. Gorton found that Vladas Zajanckauskas served the Nazis from mid-1942 until March 1945, and that after training as a guard at the Nazi-operated Trawniki Training Camp in German-occupied Poland, Zajanckauskas rose through the ranks to become a guard trainer himself. Citing captured German wartime documents, Judge Gorton concluded that clear, convincing and unequivocal evidence established that in April 1943, Zajanckauskas was deployed with a contingent of Trawniki personnel to Warsaw as a non-commissioned officer during the operation to clear and destroy the Warsaw Ghetto. The Nazis had forcibly confined some 40,000 Jews from the city and surrounding areas there under inhumane conditions. Trawniki men guarded the ghetto to prevent Jews from escaping, guarded the *Umschlagplatz*

(transit square) where captured Jews awaited rail transport to the Treblinka extermination camp and other Nazi camps, and escorted the train transports of captured Jews to their ultimate destinations. The brutal ghetto clearance operation lasted until mid-May 1943.

Zajanckauskas, 89, immigrated to the United States from Austria in February 1950. The court found that he concealed his Nazi service when he applied for a visa by telling U.S. officials that he had been a farmer in Lithuania until 1944.

Office of Special Investigations (OSI) Director Eli M. Rosenbaum said, “The Warsaw Ghetto liquidation, in which Zajanckauskas and his men took part, was among the cruelest and most notorious episodes in the Third Reich’s genocidal campaign to murder millions of innocent Jewish men, women and children.”

The proceedings to denaturalize Zajanckauskas were instituted by OSI and the United States Attorney’s Office in Boston. The matter was tried before Judge Gorton by OSI Senior Trial Attorneys Jeffrey L. Menkin and William H. Kenety. The case is a result of OSI's ongoing efforts to identify, investigate and take legal action against former participants in Nazi persecution who reside in the United States. Since OSI began operations in 1979, it has won cases against 96 individuals who assisted in Nazi persecution. In addition, more than 170 individuals who sought to enter the United States in recent years have been blocked from doing so as a result of OSI's “Watch List” program, which is enforced in cooperation with the Department of Homeland Security.

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